

Frequently Asked Questions to the Staff of the Georgia Medical Board Regarding the Physician Licensure Process

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It is RECOMMENDED that YOU DO NOT ACCEPT an offer to practice medicine in Georgia UNTIL you have been notified in writing from the Board that you have met all necessary requirements for physician licensure.

- 1. How do I obtain an application for physician licensure?** The quickest and easiest way to obtain an application for physician licensure is by downloading the forms from our website at www.medicalboard.state.ga.us under **Information for Health Care Professionals, Download Application, click on Physicians, and then click on Physician Application.** A request for an application for physician licensure may also be requested in writing by submitting the following information: your legal name and mailing address, or by contacting the Board directly at (404) 656-3913 or 3914 and requesting an application by phone.
- 2. Does an application for a Georgia Medical License have an expiration date? YES.** Applications for a Georgia Medical License remain active for **one-year only**. If you applied for a Georgia Medical License and were not issued a permanent license within 12 months, you must reapply by submitting a new application, with your most current information, in addition to an application fee. Upon receipt and review of your application, we will notify you of any documentation previously provided which is acceptable. All other information, such as letters of reference and a current resume **MUST BE** resubmitted. We will not simply “reactivate” your old application. Letters of reference forms are good for **six-months** only from the date of receipt.
- 3. What does “primary source verification” mean?** The Medical Board verifies all applicant information as “primary source” verification. This means that we must receive the information **DIRECTLY** from the issuing source. Please refer to the application instructions for additional information on what primary source documentation is acceptable by the applicant.
- 4. What does board certified mean?** Board certified means that a physician has taken and passed an oral and written exam given by a certifying specialty board in their field of expertise or specialty.
- 5. Does Georgia make a distinction between being a Medical Doctor (M.D.) and being a Doctor of Osteopathy (D.O.) when issuing a Georgia Medical License?** MD’s and DO’s are classified as “physicians” in Georgia. The Medical Board makes no distinction between the two and both are issued the same type of medical license. However, for statistical information and because other state and federal agencies as well as professional organizations often seek information “only on MD’s” or “only on DO’s,” we do keep this information on our database.
- 6. What is a temporary license?** A temporary Medical License is allowed under Georgia law, and is issued at the discretion of the Executive Director, with the approval of the Board President. Such licenses shall have the force and effect of a permanent license until the next Board meeting, when such temporary licenses become void by Georgia law. Even though you have filed an application with the Board, a temporary license will not be issued until all administrative screening processes have been completed. **How much does it cost?** When you become eligible for a Temporary license, you will be notified in writing. You must submit a request in writing for a temporary license and include a check/money order for **\$100.00** made payable to the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners. It is further recommended that **YOU DO NOT ACCEPT** an offer of employment in Georgia **UNTIL** you have met all the necessary requirements for licensure.
- 7. May I apply for a temporary Georgia Medical License if I will be coming to Georgia to work on a temporary basis only?** **NO.** Georgia does not issue locum tenens licenses or other limited, temporary medical licenses. A temporary license may only be issued after an applicant has met all requirements established by the state of Georgia for permanent licensure. You must apply for a permanent Georgia Medical License if you wish to practice medicine in Georgia.
- 8. What's the difference in the training required by American versus International programs?** American and Canadian graduates are required to **have** one year of ACGME, AMA or RCPSC accredited post-graduate training. **International Medical School** graduates and **Fifth Pathway** applicants who graduate from medical school **on or before July 1, 1985** must complete **one (1) year** of post-grad/residency training in the US in a program approved by the ACGME, AMA or the RCPSC. **After July 1, 1985** international/fifth pathway graduates must complete **three (3) years** of training in an ACGME, AOA or the RCPSC of post-graduate training, because we do not have any way to effectively determine the quality of an applicant’s medical education from schools outside the United States or Canada. Both American and International graduates must pass all three steps of the USMLE examination.

9. **If my application is not received as “completed” by the 15-business day deadline to go to the next Board meeting, what should I do?** In most cases, the only thing to do is to follow-up with your primary source verifiers to find out if missing documentation has been sent to the Board. An application is considered complete when all the application pages, primary source documentation, and administrative screenings have been conducted. A final quality assurance audit of your application is the final process before your application is considered complete. You will be notified in writing when your application is complete. Staff cannot submit an incomplete application to the Board for approval.
10. **I have a job offer and need a medical license immediately. What should I do?** The application process takes approximately six (6) to eight (8) weeks to complete. In the application instructions, applicants are informed **NOT TO ACCEPT EMPLOYMENT** until they receive their Georgia Medical License. The Board must stress to you that it is highly recommended that **YOU DO NOT ACCEPT** an offer of employment in Georgia **UNTIL** you have met all the necessary requirements for licensure and have been notified in writing of your approval for a medical license.
11. **May I apply for a Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) number with a temporary Georgia Medical License?** Upon issuance of a temporary license **you may apply** for DEA registration number. Please contact the DEA at 1-888-219-7898 or 1-800-882-9539. For additional information, you may want to visit the DEA web page at: <http://www.deadiversion.usdoj.gov/>.
12. **May I apply for a Medicaid or Medicare provider number with a temporary Georgia Medical License?** **NO**, the Medicaid and Medicare programs **DO NOT ACCEPT** temporary Georgia Medical Licenses for billing purposes. You must have your permanent Georgia Medical License **BEFORE** you apply for your provider number.
13. **I am scheduled to complete my residency-training program in June of next year, when should I apply for my Georgia Medical License?** Applications for a Georgia Medical License remain active for **one year** only. Therefore, you should not apply for a medical license with the Georgia Medical Board until three (3) or four (4) months prior to completing your post-graduate training if you attended a medical school in the United States or Canada. International medical school graduates must complete 3 years of post-graduate training in a Board approved program in the United States. Therefore, international medical school graduates should not apply until their 32nd month of training (2 years and 8 months).
14. **May I place my Georgia Medical License “on hold” or in an “inactive status”? If so, is there a fee involved? YES**, you may request an application to have your active medical license placed on an inactive status. By doing so, you will receive all correspondence from the Medical Board and you will not receive a renewal notice while on inactive status (lapsed licensees are not contacted once the license has lapsed.) There is a **one-time fee of \$140.00** to place your license in “inactive” status. Carefully consider your decision to place your license on inactive status because should you want to place your license on active status again, **you will have to apply for reinstatement of your license and pay a fee of \$200.00. The application process can take six (6) to eight (8) weeks to reinstate your license to active status**; therefore, you may find it easier to pay the renewal fee every two years than to go through the application process to reinstate your inactive status.
15. **I have decided not to move to Georgia and I want to withdraw my application. What should I do? Is my application fee refundable?** If you decide during the application process that you would like to withdraw your application, it is necessary for you to put this request in writing and sign and date the request and give a brief explanation as to why you would like to withdraw your application. Fees paid to the Georgia Medical Board are **non-refundable** whether or not a license is issued, an application is withdrawn or the application is denied.
16. **May a physician who is licensed in another state practice in Georgia using a license from another state?** **ONLY** under the unique circumstances where a doctor who is licensed and is in good standing in another state and who is employed by a federal installation, such as a veterans' hospital, an Indian reservation or military base. Such a doctor may not practice elsewhere in the state of Georgia without first obtaining a Georgia Medical License.
17. **Are doctors in Georgia required to obtain Continuing Medical Education (CME's) every year?** Physicians are required to complete twenty hours per year of Continuing Medical Education Units (or, 40 hours over the two year validation period of the license). **How do you know they are fulfilling their obligation?** At the time of renewal, proof of CME completion IS NOT required in advance. Continuing Medical Education is checked by random audits of renewing physicians and must be provided to a representative of the Composite State Board of Medical Examiners upon demand. Failure to provide proof of CME completion may lead to possible disciplinary action by the Medical Board.
18. **How do I find out about career opportunities in rural Georgia?** For information concerning practice opportunities in rural Georgia, please contact the **Office of Rural Health Services** at (229) 401-3090 or visit the **Department of Community Health, Office of Rural Health Services** web page at: <http://www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/>.
19. **How do I find out about minority health concerns in Georgia?** For information concerning minority health issues in Georgia, please contact the **Office of Minority Health** at 404-657-6707 or visit the **Department of Community Health, Office of Minority Health** web page at: <http://www.communityhealth.state.ga.us/>.
20. **How do I register for USMLE Step 3? For information on how to register for USMLE Step 3, contact the Federation of State Medical Boards** at www.FSMB.org or by phone at 817-868-4000.